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## Predeployment: Family Readiness Processing

*Good preparation and judicious use of resources can reduce stress and family problems during predeployment and family readiness processing.*

- # Preventive Maintenance
- # Predeployment Briefings
- # Emotional Preparation
- # Practical Preparation
- # Briefing Outline
- # Family Support during Deployment
- # Family Readiness Groups' Role in Unannounced Deployments
- # Roles and Responsibilities
- # Deployment 101



## PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE

Mission readiness and effectiveness are high-priority items for Army commands. Army leaders recognize that well-constructed family readiness programs that are sensitive to “people needs” are important factors in achieving mission readiness.

Family readiness programs are not built in a day but require time and effort from a number of sources. Especially critical are family member predeployment briefings, which contribute to mission effectiveness, readiness, and training by teaching families to manage time apart.

Family-member predeployment briefings cannot achieve this purpose if they are isolated events. They must be an integrated part of the commander’s family readiness plan, including FRGs, the rear detachment commander, and ACS assistance.

This section contains predeployment briefing guidelines and resources to help both soldier and family cope with separation. Some of the material is appropriate for handouts or inclusion in welcome and briefing packets. The family readiness materials from Chapter 3 of this handbook can also be used in family-member predeployment briefings; they may already have been covered in FRG meetings.

In most cases, a short notice or no notice alert will find the soldier and family unprepared for deployment, unless a special effort has been made to prepare in advance. Unit commanders must take an active role in ensuring that their soldiers are ready for deployment at all times. This tells the soldier that family deployment readiness is a command priority. It says, “I care.”

At regular intervals, the unit commander (or his designee) might sign off on a checklist for each soldier; an incentive might be offered for families who are most ready for deployment. Perhaps a workshop at the unit level would give soldiers and family members time to establish what needs to be done and what assistance they need to get it done, especially if the unit FRG has not sponsored such a program.

Taking care of family affairs in advance gives the soldier and family more time to spend together prior to deployment. It might also leave more time at predeployment briefings for essential briefings about the deployment destination, when such information does not breach security.

To assist families in preparing for the practical aspects of deployment, they should be briefed and offered assistance in the areas of finance, family record-keeping, bank accounts, insurance, wills, Powers of Attorney (POA), emergency assistance, crime prevention and safety, nutritional health, and household and automobile maintenance.

Soldiers and family members must understand that maintaining family readiness is a mutual responsibility. The spouse must have enough information to enable him or her to know what to expect from the soldier. One suggestion is for the family to set aside a

specific time each month to go over family records—a “togetherness” activity for which they could reward themselves by doing something special.

## PREDEPLOYMENT BRIEFINGS

Predeployment briefings for soldiers and family members help equip them to cope with an upcoming separation by acquainting them with unit plans and making available handbooks and information on spouse contacts and post and community resources. The following guidance refers to briefings that will be conducted on the battalion level when the battalion deploys as part of a task force. Units are encouraged to conduct similar briefings when they deploy as smaller elements. These milestones should be kept in mind, as advance planning is important:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Responsibility of</b>
Six weeks prior to deployment	Schedule briefing to include facility, speakers, equipment, refreshments.	S-1, S-3
Five weeks prior to deployment	Send out personal invitations from battalion commander.	S-1
Three weeks prior to deployment	Conduct briefing.	Battalion commander

The battalion should publish procedures for the conduct of battalion predeployment briefings, reserve the facility to be used, and ensure adequate equipment is available.

The S-1 should schedule briefing presentations, send out invitations, designate an officer in charge (OIC) for the briefing, provide for refreshments, and arrange for childcare. In addition, he/she should ensure that pertinent information is prepared and distributed at the briefing—including information from the American Red Cross (ARC), Army Community Service, and other family-helping agencies.

The briefings can be built on a schedule similar to the following:

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Presented by</b>	<b>Time</b>
Welcome	Battalion commander	15 min
Personnel issues	Battalion S-1	15 min
Predeployment information	ACS staff	10 min
Security	Provost Marshal Office	05 min
Break		15 min
Rear detachment concerns	RDC	10 min
Financial assistance	Financial Readiness/CFSNCO	10 min
Religious support	Unit Chaplain	10 min
Legal issues	Staff Judge Advocate Ofc	15 min

Other optional briefers may be the Guard or Reserve Family Program Coordinator or key FRG personnel. A Staff Judge Advocate (SJA) officer might make a presentation on Powers of Attorney and wills. Following the formal briefing, units may want to hold FRG meetings to elaborate on issues specific to their group.

A great deal of planning must go into a successful briefing, and there is no shortage of good material. The remainder of this section outlines things to be taken into consideration in planning predeployment briefings and areas of concern that might be discussed. There will be more material here than a single briefing can address; the content should be tailored to local needs and might be varied from one deployment to the next. Some topics may already have been covered in FRG workshops.

A group planning session for the briefing could include the major installation family readiness personnel, Guard or Reserve Family Program Coordinator, and representatives of the unit to be supported, such as:

- # the unit commander and senior NCO (with FRG leadership, as appropriate);
- # an ACS representative; and
- # the unit chaplain, TRICARE representative, a representative from the legal office or other representatives, as appropriate.

Whenever possible, it might be a good idea to have speakers from the civilian community to present ways the spouse can become involved in the larger community.

In choosing an appropriate date, consider the deployment needs of the unit. Time selection is a difficult task as many families have both spouses working. When large numbers are deploying, consider both a daytime and an evening briefing. If only one briefing is decided upon, most likely an evening time would reach the greatest number.

The length of the briefing will depend upon choices made in content, but a good rule of thumb is not to exceed two hours. Shown below are some options to be coordinated with deployment processing agencies.

- # Weekday afternoon at approximately 1300. Provide childcare for children not in school. Soldiers who attend should leave work (if not in the duty section) at the end of the briefing.
- # Weekday morning at approximately 0930 to ensure that children are in school. Release soldiers from duty to transport family members, if needed, and to attend the briefing.
- # Weekday evening at approximately 1900 or 1930. Provide childcare.

The location and meeting area are crucial. Ensure that the space available can accommodate the anticipated number of attendees and that there is adequate parking nearby. Consider the briefing an opportunity to develop a sense of “family” within the unit.

## **FAMILY RESOURCE LINK**

### **TOPIC: Predeployment Briefings**

One battalion commander arranged for the NCO Club and brought more than 400 persons to a briefing to send off two batteries to Bosnia. Ninety-two donated pizzas were served at 6:00 p.m. The briefing began at 6:30 p.m. to a quiet and attentive audience, with many children. The briefers spoke for 10 minutes max. At 8:00 p.m., the commander told the soldiers and families that he would care for these families remaining “as if they were our very own.” After taking three questions from the floor, he adjourned the group. The briefers remained for a short time to answer other questions.

Two types of issues should be covered. Some material should deal with the emotions associated with family separation, such as stress, communicating feelings, and helping children cope. There should also be information on practical aspects of deployment. This includes a mission statement, standard procedures, readiness checklists, and so on.

Included in these guidelines are suggestions for developing content. These ideas are not all-inclusive; those conducting briefings are encouraged to supplement these suggestions when necessary. Creativity in both content and method of presentation are critical to full participation. Attendees should be actively involved in the briefing; they may have coping skills to share with others present.

Be sensitive to the needs of the entire unit and all family members. From the list below, choose speakers who are dynamic and have been determined to be most appropriate. Add others as desired. Active participation by the commanding officer and the sergeant major is essential, but consider these as well:

- # ACS representative or Guard or Reserve Family Program Coordinator;
- # Staff Judge Advocate;
- # Army Emergency Relief (AER) representative;
- # ARC representative;
- # Unit Chaplain;
- # Provost Marshal;
- # Medical treatment facility or TRICARE representative;
- # Finance and accounting representative;
- # FRG chairperson and other well-known, articulate family members; and
- # RDC and CFS (Command Financial Specialist) personnel.

Provide good publicity through as many sources as possible. Some ways of getting the word out include personal letters mailed from the commanding officer to each spouse (strongly recommended; should be addressed to the spouse by name, not to “Dear Spouse”) or publication in the unit newsletter, post newspaper, or daily bulletin.

Attendees appreciate receiving an agenda of briefing events. It is important to provide information in the form of a handout that includes these items:

- # mailing address of deployed soldier;
- # name and telephone number of the RDC and location of the unit RDC office;
- # speakers’ names, agencies, and telephone numbers;
- # locally developed deployment guides or family assistance materials;
- # standard procedures for dealing with emergencies;
- # information on FRGs; and
- # Guard or Reserve Family Program Coordinator brochures or leaflets.

Some of the following items will be useful as well:

- # printed program/agenda,
- # will forms,
- # Power of Attorney forms,
- # allotment forms,
- # release forms for privacy act disclosure,
- # family member predeployment checklist,
- # ACS brochures indicating classes offered to family members, and
- # FRG information and training.

Some additional recommended items include:

- # list of suggested activities for family members,
- # reading list,
- # list of ways to deal with stress and handouts pertinent to stress,
- # material on family relations,
- # information on child-rearing practices,
- # list of planned get-togethers for families, and
- # *The Army Family Readiness Handbook* (Chapter 3).

Contact your ACS representative for copies of these and similar items.

## **EMOTIONAL PREPARATION**

Separation of family members due to deployment is stressful. Individual family members are subjected to different worries, fears, and anxieties before, during, and after these separations. Role changes during separation cause significant stress for both spouse and children.

The four basic stages in the departure-return cycle are:

- # protest against loss or departure,
- # despair,
- # detachment, and
- # return adjustment.

These may be discussed as they relate to the stages of predeployment, deployment, and postdeployment. The following descriptions may be helpful.

### **Emotions Run High Prior to Deployment**

Two to four weeks before leaving, a mixture of emotions such as anger, sorrow, and fear surfaces in families. These feelings are expressed through psychological distancing, clinging, or crying. The soldier withdraws from the family and spends more time at work or with friends, or engages in other activities that exclude the family. Grouchy and quick-tempered behavior is sometimes evident. Spouses become “too busy” for shared time or to go anywhere. One or both may try to protect themselves from the hurt of parting by gradual physical withdrawal. He or she may talk to other family members about feelings of hurt or rejection.

What’s needed at this time is understanding. It helps if family members can understand that the soldier has a need to behave in this manner; it is not a personal rejection of them. The soldier is trying to prepare for the separation.

Honest and open communication between family members is very important, especially so when emotional needs exist. Soldiers can reassure family members by telling them, “I’m going to miss you.” The words “I love you” are the most important words said before separation.

### **Understand the Children**

Families must be taught not to be unnecessarily hard on children. If parents learn to acknowledge their own feelings, they will easily see how the children, too, are reacting to the coming separation. Temper tantrums, whining, and other similar behaviors are reactions to tension that children pick up from the soldier and spouse during this stressful period; children are not being deliberately naughty.

The soldier may demand attention and constantly be underfoot. Or the spouse may become clinging and needy. The soldier is likely to hear, “How will I live without you? I’ll never be able to get along.” Children may show an increased need for attention through positive and negative behaviors. They may demonstrate fear of the unknown (or known), of inadequacy, of an inability to cope, or of a loss of love. Family members may feel annoyed or strangled by this behavior. This may lead to a feeling of guilt.

The soldier must reassure family members by letting them know that he or she understands their fears. One way of acknowledging this is by saying, “I know it is going to be hard for you. I don’t want to leave you either, but I’m confident you can manage. You’ve done it before.”

### **Communication Is a Stress Reliever**

Communication is the key to dealing with predeployment stress. How much stress family members suffer will depend on how well they communicate during this two-to-four-week predeployment period. Before the soldier leaves, the entire family needs to sit down and talk about their feelings concerning the separation. The discussion should include what will happen when dad or mom is gone, how they will keep in touch, fun things the remaining family members can do while the soldier is away, and what will be different upon return.

### **Getting Adjusted**

Deployment generates a new set of responses. During the first two weeks of separation, the spouse experiences feelings of loss, anger, and mild depression. Loss of appetite or constant eating, weight loss or gain, stomach pains, sleeplessness, and waking up early prevail. The spouse may be short with the children. After about a month, most spouses are into a fairly workable routine, which continues—with highs and lows—for the remainder of the separation.

For the first few days, the soldier may be too busy, excited, and challenged to feel the pangs of separation. When the routine becomes stabilized, the soldier may be moody, forgetful, and quick to anger. Most of this will pass in two to three weeks and will not reoccur until two to three weeks before return. Depending on workload and pressure, a mild depression may occur in the middle of separation.

### **Children’s Behavior**

The kids may have sleep disturbances, nightmares, appetite problems, or behavior problems (temper tantrums), and they may test new limits. Bedwetting in recently trained children may occur. Older children may pick fights and resist authority. They may be inattentive at school, and grades may slip. Discipline can be a problem; the usual pattern of discipline should be continued.

Children should not necessarily be allowed to sleep with a parent; however, cuddling, hugging, and special one-on-one time is important. Limits must be set immediately—the children should know from the start what is and what is not permissible. This is especially important if the departing soldier is the disciplinarian in the family.

The main influence on how well the children cope with family separation is the attitude displayed by the parent who is present. One of the main factors that influences parental attitude is the quality of the social environment. Parents need to be supported in their efforts to parent effectively.

This is where a successful family readiness system and the FRG network come in handy. Remaining family members are likely to feel less isolated and will get support from others if they are encouraged to be a part of this network.

### **Reunion Dynamics**

The postdeployment period has its own stresses. Tension emerges approximately two weeks before and two weeks after return. Various kinds of expectations are set. The soldier may feel confident that everything and everyone will be just as they were when he or she left, and that the soldier will be welcomed with open arms immediately into old places and roles. On the other hand, he or she may fear that everything will be changed; the family will not take him or her back. Roles may have been taken over by other family members; he or she is no longer needed.

The spouse may fear that the soldier will not like the new competence gained during the separation or that newfound freedom and confidence will be taken away when old roles are resumed. Conflicting emotional reactions surface: anger; resentment of intrusion; fear of loss of freedom, self-esteem, love or acceptance; and blaming the spouse for whatever went wrong or for changes that have taken place.

The children may fear that the soldier will return and express anger for a long list of misdeeds that the other parent has saved up for him or her. All of those “wait ‘til Dad gets home” situations will now become reality.

Effective family communication during deployment may help reduce the reentry stress. Most families work out reintegration problems and arrive at a fairly stable routine within two to three weeks after the soldier returns. (Additional information on meeting reunion challenges is provided later in this chapter.)

## **FAMILY RESOURCE LINK**

### **TOPIC: Family Care Plans**

**Discussion:** With thousands of single-parent Army families and families in which both parents serve in the Armed Forces, there is a considerable need Army-wide for workable Family Care Plans that can be immediately administered in short-notice deployments. Unit commanders and RDCs must expect that some Family Care Plans may fail, especially during long deployments.

**Lessons:** The adequacy of Family Care Plans over time is the responsibility of the servicemember. However, unit commanders are responsible for critically reviewing Family Care Plans and judging their adequacy.

Family Care Plans must be carefully screened by unit commanders and hard questions asked about the guardian's capacity, willingness, and availability.

- # RDCs should monitor Family Care Plans, include guardians in the distribution of information, and provide support as appropriate.
- # If a Family Care Plan fails after deployment, the RDC must coordinate with the deployed soldier and his or her unit on actions to resolve the situation. Deployed soldiers whose Family Care Plans fail are not able to concentrate on their duties until the situation is rectified.

## **PRACTICAL PREPARATION**

### **Financial Preparation**

Prior to leaving, there is an immediate need for the family to plan finances. Questions about how much money is available and how much money should be left for the family should be addressed. As a minimum, family members must be left with enough money to cover monthly expenses.

The best way to ensure family financial security is through the monthly allotment. Soldiers should be encouraged to set up an allotment in the spouse's name not only to cover basic needs (rent, utilities, food, clothing, and transportation) but also for some pleasures such as entertainment. The need to make a proper adjustment to the family's requirements and income should be emphasized. So, too, should the need to reach an understanding with creditors or combine and refinance debts.

Often, neither soldier nor spouse knows where important family papers are kept. A family crisis that would make locating these papers necessary can occur at any time. Family documents should be grouped together and put in a single box in a secure and permanent place. Share these suggestions during the briefing:

- # Use a bank for savings and checking accounts.
- # Maintain a bank account during your entire military career, either in your hometown or in each permanent station, in order to get checks cashed.
- # Ensure that accounts are also in the spouse's name, that he or she has the passbook to savings accounts, and that he or she knows how much money is deposited to accounts and when.
- # Consider a second checking account for the soldier to use during deployment so he or she will know exactly what funds are available to spend. Otherwise, the regular account that the spouse will be using during the absence may be overdrawn.
- # Make certain that beneficiary designations and premiums for life insurance policies are up to date.
- # If property and automobile insurance will expire during the tour, make arrangements for renewal.
- # An up-to-date will is urgently needed to safeguard hard-to-come-by family belongings in the event of death. The individual gets to choose who he or she wants to take possession of the belongings.
- # Legal assistance in preparing a will is available to every soldier.

### **Powers of Attorney—Be Careful in Using These**

A Power of Attorney authorizes someone to act in the soldier's behalf during his or her absence. A General Power of Attorney is a very broad and sweeping grant of authority. Although useful in conducting personal business in the soldier's absence, it should not be

made without prior consultation with a legal assistance officer or other attorney. General Powers of Attorney are not always sufficient for some legal transactions. It is wise to anticipate major needs that might occur during deployment, such as buying a house or a car, and then check to determine if a Special Power of Attorney is needed. A Special Power of Attorney also designates another individual to act in the soldier's behalf, but only for specific matters or actions.

### **Special Needs Assistance**

Types of assistance available, such as loans through AER and the handling of emergency messages by ARC, should be discussed, including those services available to family members with special needs. In some cases, soldiers may need help understanding the special needs of their spouses. For example, others may not easily understand the isolation felt by a non-English speaker.

### **Crime Prevention, Safety, and Security**

Safety and security should be special concerns for husbands and wives during deployment. Soldiers will feel more comfortable about leaving if they have done all that they can to ensure their families' well being. A complete residential security survey from the local provost marshal or nonmilitary policeman is advisable. The following precautions should be emphasized to the FRG members:

- # If the apartment or house does not have a peephole in the door, install one.
- # If outside doors do not have deadbolt locks, install them.
- # If windows are not secured, they should have good locks or should be drilled and pinned to prevent opening from the outside.
- # Sliding doors should have adequate locks or anti-jimmie devices to prevent entry by prying the door open or removing it from its tracks.
- # A phone is a necessity for security and communication. Ask that rank not be listed in the phone book. This helps to avoid harassment. Some families list only the soldier's first initial.
- # Post emergency phone numbers and procedures beside the phone, or actually taped to it, so they can be readily found.
- # If obscene or nuisance calls are a problem, avoid answering the phone using your name. If the caller remains silent or makes obscene remarks, quietly hang up. Keep a whistle near the phone and use it. If calls are repeated, take the phone off the hook temporarily. If the calls continue, report them to the phone company representative and follow his or her advice.
- # If a phone chain (a list of unit spouses and phone numbers) is provided, protect this information.
- # Plan escape routes in case of fire, burglary, or other emergency, and be sure all family members can use them.

- # Leave an extra key with trusted neighbors for emergencies.
- # Carry an extra car key in your wallet, or wear it on a chain.
- # In case the neighbor is not home when needed, bury a front door key in a jar in the yard near some easily remembered spot.
- # When traveling, avoid putting your address on outside tags. Pin that information inside the luggage in case of loss.
- # Do not list your name on the mailbox unless it is required by the post office.
- # Report any door-to-door soliciting in military housing.
- # Carpool to evening functions during deployment with at least one other spouse.
- # Know some neighbors well, so if you are followed coming home you can go to their door.
- # Cellular telephones are a great source of emergency assistance.
- # Some communities recommend that front and/or back door lights be left on all night. Consider investing in several timers for lights and appliances. Whatever is done with lights, use a consistent pattern so that they do not signal absence or the soldier's deployment.

For personal security when away from home, follow these guidelines:

- # When driving, stay on busy, well-lighted streets as much as possible, and avoid driving in the curb lane at night. Keep your door locked.
- # Walk with a companion when possible, and stay away from dark alleys and bushes.
- # Do not pick up any hitchhikers under any circumstances.
- # If the car breaks down in an isolated area, raise the hood. Sit inside your car until help comes. Do not open the windows or unlock the doors to talk to strangers offering assistance. Instead, if you do not have a cell phone, ask permission to use their cell phone to call police for assistance. If no one has a cell phone, ask them to go to the nearest pay phone and summon police.
- # Never carry large sums of cash. Flashing a lot of bills sets you up to be held up.
- # Don't resist an armed robber. Hand over your wallet or purse quickly and quietly. Make mental notes of the description of the robber, weapons, and vehicle, and identify any witnesses.
- # Lock your car when you leave it. Roll up the windows, and take your keys with you. If you must leave anything of value in the car, lock it in the trunk.
- # Report any crime or suspicion of crime at once. Public apathy is the criminal's greatest ally. No violation is too small to be reported. You can't assume that someone else has already reported it.
- # Should you be stopped by a police officer on or off post, be polite and understanding. This person is doing his or her job.

## *Precautions for Avoidance of Terrorist Attacks*

### Before an Attack

1. Learn about the nature of terrorism. Terrorists look for visible targets, with high “shock” impact potential, where they can also avoid detection before or after an attack such as international airports, large cities, major international events, resorts, federal and government buildings, schools, and high-profile landmarks.
2. Learn about the different types of terrorist weapons including kamikaze vehicles, explosives, kidnappings, hijackings, arson, and shootings.
3. Prepare to deal with a terrorist incident by adapting many of the same techniques used to prepare for other crises.
  - a. Be alert and aware of the surrounding area. The very nature of terrorism suggests that there may be little or no warning.
  - b. Take precautions when traveling. Be aware of conspicuous or unusual behavior. Do not accept packages from strangers. Do not leave luggage unattended.
  - c. Learn where emergency exits are located. Think ahead about how to evacuate a building, subway, or congested public area in a hurry. Learn where staircases are located.
  - d. Notice your immediate surroundings. Be aware of heavy or breakable objects that could move, fall, or break during an explosion.
  - e. If you are in an overseas location, know where your non-combatant evacuation (NEO) packets are and the name of your NEO warden.

#### 4. Prepare for a Building Explosion

The use of explosives by terrorists can result in collapsed buildings and fires. People who live or work in a multi-level building can do the following:

- a. Review emergency evacuation procedures. Know where fire exits are located.
- b. Keep fire extinguishers in working order. Know where they are located and how to use them.
- c. Learn first aid. Contact the local chapter of the American Red Cross for additional information.
- d. Keep the following items in a designated place on each floor of the building: portable battery-operated radio and extra batteries; several flashlights and extra batteries; first aid kit and manual; several hard hats; and fluorescent tape to rope off dangerous areas.
- e. There may be bombs being sent through the mail. A package bomb sent to a school or public building might be a technique used by terrorists. Check all packages and watch for:
  - # tampering or re-taping of a box;
  - # sender unknown to you; not usual supplier;

- # stains or unusual odors coming from the box;
- # heavy, unbalanced contents;
- # addressee unknown; and
- # generic address (“Customer, Occupant,” etc.).

## 5. Know How to Handle Bomb Threats

If you receive a bomb threat, get as much information from the caller as possible. Keep the caller on the line, and record everything that is said. Notify the police, building security, and building management.

After you’ve been notified of a bomb threat, do not touch any suspicious packages. Clear the area around any suspicious packages, and notify the police immediately. In evacuating a building, avoid standing in front of windows or other potentially hazardous areas. Do not restrict sidewalks or streets to be used by emergency officials.

### During an Attack

1. In a building explosion, get out of the building as quickly and calmly as possible.
2. If items are falling off of bookshelves or from the ceiling, get under a sturdy table or desk.
3. If there is a fire:
  - a. Stay low to the floor, and exit the building as quickly as possible.
  - b. Cover your nose and mouth with a wet cloth.
  - c. When approaching a closed door, use the palm of your hand and forearm to feel the lower, middle, and upper parts of the door. If it is not hot, brace yourself against the door and open it slowly. If it is hot to the touch, do not open the door—seek an alternate escape route.
  - d. Heavy smoke and poisonous gases collect first along the ceiling. Stay below the smoke at all times.

### After an Attack

If you are trapped in debris:

- # Use a flashlight.
- # Stay in your area so you don’t kick up dust. Cover your mouth with a handkerchief or clothing.
- # Tap on a pipe or wall so rescuers can hear where you are. Use a whistle if one is available. Shout only as a last resort—shouting can cause a person to inhale dangerous amounts of dust.

## Assisting Victims

Untrained persons should not attempt to rescue people who are inside a collapsed building. Wait for emergency personnel to arrive.

### *Chemical Agents*

Chemical agents are poisonous gases, liquids, or solids that have toxic effects on people, animals, or plants. Most chemical agents cause serious injuries or death. The severity of injuries depends on the type and amount of the chemical agent used, and the duration of the exposure.

Were a chemical agent attack to occur, authorities would instruct citizens to either seek shelter where they are and seal the premises or to evacuate immediately. Exposure to chemical agents can be fatal. Leaving the shelter to rescue or assist victims can be a deadly decision. There is no assistance that the untrained person can offer that would likely be of any value to the victims of chemical agents.

### *Biological Agents*

Biological agents are organisms or toxins that have illness-producing effects on people, livestock, and crops.

Because biological agents cannot necessarily be detected and may take time to grow and cause a disease, it is almost impossible to know that a biological attack has occurred. If government officials become aware of a biological attack through an informant or warning by terrorists, they will most likely instruct citizens to either seek shelter where they are and seal the premises or to evacuate immediately.

A person affected by a biological agent requires the immediate attention of professional medical personnel. Some biological agents are contagious, and victims may need to be quarantined. Also, some medical facilities may not receive victims for fear of contaminating the hospital population.

For information on Anthrax, Smallpox, and other public threats, check:  
*www.homelandhealth.com/consumers.*

For additional information and subsequent precautions, check out the following links:

*<http://www.fema.gov/library/terror.htm>*

*<http://www.epa.gov/swercepp/cntr-ter.html>*

*<http://nsi.org/Library/Terrorism/bombthreat.html>*

## **FAMILY RESOURCE LINK**

### **TOPIC: Family Security and Safety, and Firearms**

**Discussion:** Family security and safety are concerns to soldiers and families when the soldier is away from home. Units should include family security in predeployment family support planning.

**Lessons:** Major commands can minimize soldier and family concerns prior to deployment through active support from their Directorate of Public Works (or DEH) and the Provost Marshal.

- # For example, on-post quarters should be equipped with dead-bolt locks. Housing areas should be well lighted and continually patrolled by military police.
- # Off-post families, especially those overseas, should be advised not to put up yellow ribbons or red, white, and blue banners that call attention to their quarters as being those of deployed soldiers.
- # Commands have been surprised by the “run” on handguns at local Rod and Gun Clubs. While family security is important, control of family firearms is a genuine safety concern to the military community. The purchase of firearms during unit deployment is sometimes a last-minute action imbedded in a multitude of other important deployment actions. Often, there is little or no time to effectively train the spouse in proper control and use of firearms. There is an ever-present danger that family weapons may become accessible to young children or adolescents, who are largely naive about their potential dangers or proper handling.
- # Commanders have moral and statutory responsibilities to control privately owned firearms, especially in on-post housing areas. Soldiers are required to register privately owned firearms with the command and to secure them while they’re deployed.
- # While soldiers living in the billets are required to secure privately owned firearms in unit arms rooms, commanders can also offer the use of unit arms rooms to soldiers living in family housing or off-post to secure their privately owned firearms during deployments.

## **Nutritional Health**

Despite the changes deployment brings to families' daily lives, it is important to maintain good nutritional habits in both the amount and type of food consumed. (This applies also to medicine and alcohol.) This is true for both husbands and wives. Generally, mealtime is shared time, so it is "loaded" emotionally. Some people find that they eat more than they should when they are stressed. Some spouses find that setting out exact amounts that they plan to eat and putting the rest away helps to maintain limits on what is eaten.

Just as it is desirable to have one month's pay ahead in savings, it is wise to have at least one week's supply of food in the house at any time in case of illness, inclement weather, lack of finances, or transportation problems.

## **Don't Forget the Family Car/Truck**

The soldier should show family members how to do basic household and automobile maintenance and repairs if they do not already know. Leave a list of the preferred repair people for automobile and household emergencies. Organize the workbench and tools so all members of the family (children, too) can find tools for minor repairs. Keep a checklist of maintenance tasks to be completed before deployment.

## **Family Housing**

Generally, a big question for military couples during separation is where the family members will live. For some, there may be a choice between going home to relatives or staying in military housing. Those who stay must be especially willing to develop friendships with trusted people who can offer support when needed. This may mean going outside their immediate circle of friends and really taking advantage of the support available through the FRG. Living can be less stressful if family members learn about available community services that they can turn to for help.

Generally, the family will best deal with the stress of deployment by remaining in their home, maintaining familiar routines, and not moving to another location to stay with relatives. Relocating is always more costly, disrupts the children's schooling and their emotional stability, and takes the family away from their military support and problem-solving network. Staying in the family's current home is almost always a better option.

Provisions should be made in case it becomes necessary for family members to leave during the soldier's deployment. They should be aware of the options and standard procedures. Foremost is to notify the RDC of their new address and phone number in case an emergency involving the deployed soldier requires notifying the family. This can prevent many headaches for the RDC.

## **FAMILY RESOURCE LINK**

### **TOPIC: Families Who Leave Home during a Deployment**

- # In one battalion, a family departed the area without notifying the RDC. The soldier, deployed to another country, was diagnosed with a very contagious disease. The RDC was requested to contact the family so they could go to the nearest medical facility to be examined for evidence of this disease. The RDC received no answer to frequent telephone calls and visited the house several times, finding no one at home. A neighbor told the RDC that they had left the area to go to the spouse's home. She left no forwarding address with anyone. Finally, during one of the RDC's visits to try to contact her, she and her family drove up to the house, and the RDC was able to pass on the message. Fortunately, she and her family were free of the disease.
- # If the soldier knows his family may relocate temporarily, this information needs to be provided to the RDC, along with the address and phone of the temporary location.

## BRIEFING OUTLINE

Following is a suggested outline for a predeployment briefing for soldiers and family members. Leaders, ACS staff, FRG leaders, or chaplains can give this.

Separation is a fact of military life. There are several things you should know about it:

- A. You might experience any number of different feelings or a mixture of feelings, some of which may seem contradictory. This is common. These feelings include:
  - 1. Emptiness
  - 2. Loneliness
  - 3. Fear
  - 4. Sadness
  - 5. Anger
  - 6. Grief
- B. Keep in mind that these feelings are normal.
- C. There may be a tendency to avoid talking about the upcoming separation.
  - 1. Communication between spouses can break down prior to a separation, but it doesn't have to.
  - 2. It is better to work at communicating painful feelings than to avoid them and leave important things unsaid.
  - 3. Remember, men and women tend to communicate differently; men may be more oriented toward factual content, while women may be more attuned to feelings.
- D. There may be pre-separation anger and resentment.
  - 1. You may find yourselves on edge with each other.
  - 2. You may find yourselves arguing more frequently.
  - 3. These are normal reactions, and they can be worked through.
- E. There are several things you can do to help you cope better with your separation.
  - 1. Communicate with your spouse. Both partners are responsible for effective communication.
  - 2. Set mileposts to help the time go by.
  - 3. Manage your time; don't let it manage you.
  - 4. Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays are often more difficult to handle. Plan activities for these days.
  - 5. Keep busy with recreation, exercise classes, or volunteer work—a great way to gain experience that can be translated into a job resume.

- F. Depression may accompany your separation. Talk with someone about your feelings.
  - 1. Some depression is normal and to be expected during a period of separation.
  - 2. Depression can be aggravated by feelings of powerlessness.
  - 3. Boredom can add to depression.
  - 4. Depression can intensify if you turn your resentments inward.
- G. Remember that you are not powerless or alone; help is available through many sources.
  - 1. FRG
  - 2. Chaplain
  - 3. ACS or Guard or Reserve Family Program Coordinator
  - 4. FAC
  - 5. Other friends
  - 6. Community resources

## **FAMILY SUPPORT DURING DEPLOYMENT**

This section features candid comments from the field to reinforce the importance of the family readiness effort. It provides sample standard operating procedures (SOP) specifying the FRG's role during unannounced deployments and discusses the special roles of the RDC and Family Readiness Liaison during deployments.

### **Candid Comments from the Ranks**

Various members of the family readiness system throughout the Army made the following comments during discussions on deployment issues. Although much of the information has been included in one form or another in this handbook, the comments themselves might also help give direction to a system of continuing family readiness:

- # Traditionally, the Army priority has been mission first, welfare of troops second. This remains true, but Army leaders recognize that the welfare of troops and families has a very significant effect on successful mission accomplishment.
- # Readiness on a continuing basis means that we don't have to reinvent the wheel each time a unit deploys. Command support for the family must be timely, consistent, and ongoing.
- # The FAC makes my job a lot easier when I'm deployed because my wife knows who to contact if for nothing more than for moral support, so that she has someone to talk to for a few minutes.
- # Once I'm deployed, I'm glad there's someone who is concerned with my family so they can call for help.
- # There has to be a two-way flow of information between the command and the families; otherwise, the family feels isolated. That's not good for morale. For example, spouses should be told that the manifest may change at the last minute and that the soldier may not be returning home at the time anticipated.
- # Murphy's Law usually takes over 24 hours after deployment—whatever can go wrong does go wrong: car breaks down, toilet backs up, child gets sick. It is important that the family of the deployed soldier be ready to handle the situation.
- # Because most of the deployments of [our] division are announced, there is not a sense of urgency for soldiers to have their affairs in order ahead of time. This leaves a false sense of security. It is important that the unit commander and chain of command take the initiative in helping the soldier understand the importance of being prepared at all times.
- # To be effective, helping spouses must be legitimized and trusted with the information they need to help others.
- # An FRG might be more effective if NCO wives are encouraged to get involved instead of leaving it all to the officer's wives. If the NCO understands that there is a purpose and structure for family support, they are less likely to view the FRG as a coffee club.

- # Some senior NCOs must be encouraged to change their attitudes toward the families. They traditionally see leaving the families on their own as a “rite of passage” that’s part of being in the Army. Times have changed; if the family is not supported, the soldier will not reenlist. It’s that simple.
- # Caring is the basis of inspiring soldiers to be prepared. The unit commander’s attitude should be, “We care; therefore, we want your family to be properly taken care of in your absence.”
- # Family deployment readiness should be made a part of the “teamwork” of the unit. There should be a unit family readiness checklist for the commander.
- # Awareness and education are keys to family readiness. Effort should go into ways to convince the soldier and spouse to be prepared. A spouse should know enough about the family readiness system to be able to remind the soldier about things he or she has to do to keep the family prepared.
- # Spouses may question the sincerity of support efforts if the only contact of concern is during deployment. Therefore, it may be a good idea to establish an outreach system on a continuing basis. Contact may be viewed less as “snooping” if it is ongoing.

## **FAMILY READINESS GROUPS' ROLE IN UNANNOUNCED DEPLOYMENTS**

Family Readiness Groups are, of course, especially important during deployment, particularly in the event of an unannounced deployment when special needs arise. What follows is a set of sample standard operating procedures that might be used during an unannounced deployment, with provisions for notifying soldiers' families and solving some of the problems likely to appear.

Deployment FRG information sheets are to be filed in the unit orderly room to aid each soldier's family in the event of deployment. These are to provide a record of names, addresses, and phone numbers of next-of-kin; special medical requirements; language spoken; and family members' potential transportation problems while the military member is deployed.

Notification procedures are as follows:

- # For rostered soldiers, the unit FRG chairperson or representative will call spouses in the FRG roster active section. The unit commander will authorize inactive list notifications in the event of deployment.
- # For nonrostered soldiers, Soldier Family Information sheets are to be used to contact the next-of-kin of soldiers not on the FRG roster. The unit Point of Contact (POC) will notify a deployed single soldier's family. The FRG representative may volunteer to assist the POC in notification.
- # The Army authorizes notification of only one person or household. If the soldier has listed more than one person to be notified, the military representative will select one. As a guideline for notification priority, a wife has priority over a mother, a mother over a sister, and so on.
- # The use of government phones is authorized for notification calls. Each call must be made with approval of the unit commander or his representative and recorded on the appropriate form. Tell the operator that the call is official, and limit the call to not more than five minutes.
- # The rear detachment commander will provide the FRG representative with the following information to pass on to each soldier's family: time of soldier's deployment; soldier's current location (if known); soldier's mailing address; location for receipt of mail from soldier; location of soldier's POV and documentation required for family member to pick up the POV; and the unit POC's telephone number in case of a family emergency. This may be the FRG chairperson or representative, the RDC, a member of the FAC staff, or another designated individual.
- # The unit POC, FRG representative, or other designated caller will record each completed call. This memorandum for record will include date and time of the call, person receiving the call, and information relayed.

The following procedures apply to areas of special concern:

- # *Soldier's mail to family.* Deployed soldiers may mail letters and sometimes packages to their families.
- # *Mail to deployed soldiers.* Based on mission, deployment location, and needs of the soldiers, the unit POC, RDC, commander, or Family Assistance Center will advise family members of mailing procedures. For example, when the soldiers are deployed to areas with tropical or desert-like climates, it is better to send sealed snack foods than perishables such as cookies, brownies, cakes, or fruits.
- # *FRG telephone network.* Once deployment commences, the FRG chairperson, phonetree chairperson, or other phonetree POCs will maintain frequent contact with families on the active telephone roster. Spouses on the inactive roster are encouraged to become active during deployment. Government phones may be used to provide local information updates and long distance calls if FRG members leave the area. The FRG representative must maintain a record of each long distance and local call; the unit will have forms for this.
- # *Transportation.* The spouse may pick up the deployed soldier's POV if left in the unit area. If the soldier's vehicle is secured in the motor pool, the FRG representative can make arrangements through the RDC or unit POC to pick up the car at a time convenient to the spouse. The FRG representative can help spouses find transportation to the unit or the motor pool.
- # *Pay problems.* These are to be addressed before deployment. If problems arise during deployment, the FRG representative will contact the RDC or FAC for resolution.
- # *Army Emergency Relief.* Normally located with the ACS office, AER exists to help families with financial emergencies and to provide low-interest loans or grants to needy servicemembers and their families. The FRG will notify the RDC if a spouse needs financial help. The RDC will help complete the forms needed to request AER assistance. ACS also provides budget counseling for Army families. Families with financial problems are encouraged to seek guidance from ACS personnel or the unit Command Financial Specialist NCO (CFSNCO) if the unit has one assigned.
- # *Leave and Earnings Statements (LESs).* The RDC will deliver LESs to the orderly room at the end of each month and issue them to spouses. Coordinate transportation to the orderly room with the FRG. It is necessary to mail LESs to out-of-town spouses. A Power of Attorney or similar document, per unit SOP, is required for spouses to receive servicemember LESs.

## FAMILY RESOURCE LINK

### TOPIC: Disposition of LESs and W-2 Forms

**Discussion:** In some prior deployments, many spouses of deployed soldiers had difficulty acquiring LESs and W-2 forms. Often, the RDCs would not release these documents to the spouse, or the forms were forwarded to the theater of operations. In most cases, soldiers did not want or need the LESs while in theater.

**Lessons:** Obtaining LESs and W-2 forms is a command decision that should be made prior to deployment and relayed to Finance. Either the LESs are forwarded to the soldiers in theater or they are retained by the RDCs. If the command decides to have the RDCs retain the LESs and W-2s, spouses should be able to acquire these forms by using a Power of Attorney. However, the soldiers must specify that the spouses are authorized to receive the LESs by requesting a Power of Attorney. Units should publish LES release requirements to all soldiers and families.

- # *Legal Assistance.* The Office of the Staff Judge Advocate can answer spouses' legal questions. The RDC will provide the name of the attorney assigned to support the battalion. Any legal problems within the FRG network should be brought immediately to the attention of the RDC. While the lawyer from SJA cannot represent a family-member spouse in a civilian court, he can give advice on how to obtain a civilian lawyer.
- # *Power of Attorney.* The RDC will arrange for the spouse to obtain a POA as necessary. A SJA lawyer will prepare the paperwork, and the RDC will forward it to the deployed soldier for signature. The RDC and a SJA lawyer will advise the spouse whether a General or Special POA is appropriate. To use the POA off post, it may be necessary to register it with the state. A lawyer from SJA can explain the procedure.
- # *Identification Card (ID Card).* The RDC will be notified if an ID card is lost, stolen, or expired. He or she will initiate the necessary paperwork for reissue or renewal.

FRG volunteers and family members should be made aware of these additional sources of assistance:

- # *Chaplains.* The battalion chaplain will provide pastoral care, counseling, and assistance. The chaplain can help the FRG deal with problems and suggest other agencies that may be of service. The chaplain's office can sometimes assist those in need whose problems do not fit into other helping agencies' functions.

- # *Army Community Service.* ACS is a principal source of social services for AC and RC Army personnel and their family members. Services include emergency loans (AER), a lending closet for household items, children’s programs, childcare, FRG training, Army Family Team Building (AFTB) classes, volunteer services coordination, Army Family Action Plan (AFAP), budget counseling, welcome packets for all newcomers, and Operation READY classes.
- # *State Family Program Office.* This is the office to which Army National Guard families should turn for support similar to that provided by ACS. This office can refer the Guard family to essential services available in the community or on active Army installations. Check [www.arng.army.mil](http://www.arng.army.mil) or [www.defenselink.mil/ra/family/toolkit/toc.htm](http://www.defenselink.mil/ra/family/toolkit/toc.htm) for information about Army Reserve and National Guard family resources.
- # *Family Program Coordinator.* Some Army Reserve centers have personnel designated to assist families. If this service is not available, Army Reservists and their families can contact ACS (if near an installation) or check with a local Army National Guard unit for information on how to contact the State Family Program Office. Check <http://www.army.mil/usar/index.htm> and [www.defenselink.mil/ra/family/toolkit/toc.htm](http://www.defenselink.mil/ra/family/toolkit/toc.htm) for additional family resources.
- # *Rear detachment commander.* The RDC is a member of the battalion who has been designated to stay behind to run the day-to-day operations. He or she is the battalion-level support point of contact for FRG-related problems, providing information and assistance as needed.
- # *Telephone numbers.* The FRG and the unit POC or RDC will maintain a current list of family members’ telephone numbers, as well as those of essential service providers.

## **TIPS FOR FRG VOLUNTEERS**

### **Do:**

- # Offer support, sympathy, and a shoulder to cry on.
- # Offer to arrange “one-shot,” short-term assistance, such as commissary runs, transportation, or childcare.
- # Try to link up neighbors, friends, and same-unit wives to help each other out.
- # Offer to visit, or call to arrange for another wife to do so.
- # Pass important information to the RDC or chaplain in a timely manner.
- # Encourage wives to call each other periodically just to check up on how they are doing.
- # Stay in daily contact with the RDC or FAC.

### **Tips for FRG Volunteers (continued)**

#### **Don't:**

- # overtax or overexert yourself; trust others to help.
- # try to be all things to all people.
- # make promises or guarantees of unit assistance or action (such as bringing spouse home), or infringe on the duties of the RDC.
- # be surprised if you are misunderstood or misquoted; you can avoid both to some extent if you are clear in your communication and stay in the area of your responsibilities.
- # expect to successfully resolve every situation; sometimes you just can't win!

### **Role of the Rear Detachment Commander**

The role of the RDC is to ensure, in cooperation with the FAC and the FRG program, that families are cared for and assisted during deployment.

To that end, the RDC's responsibilities will be to implement the unit Family Assistance Plan; to provide unit information systems, facilities, and resources to FRGs; to monitor family care plans; and to train and support the Family Readiness Liaison.

The RDC is valuable to families by providing assistance that requires official action. He is the primary interface with the installation support structure. The RDC also informs of and coordinates security concerns and precautions with the FRGs.

He/she also provides assistance with emergency notification, emergency leave for soldiers, and transportation home due to death or serious illness of family or relatives. The RDC must maintain constant communication with the deployed unit, preferably through DSN telephone, fax, and e-mail. Video teleconferencing provides even more effective communications.

The RDC needs networks to do his job. His network should include the Command Financial Specialist NCO, the unit and next higher-level chaplain office, the mobilization and deployment program manager/agent at Army Community Service, and any RC unit FRL/RDC if RC personnel are part of the deployed task force. He should have a working knowledge of the installation support structure and have names and phone numbers of key personnel in community support agencies (Directorate of Community Activities [DCA]).

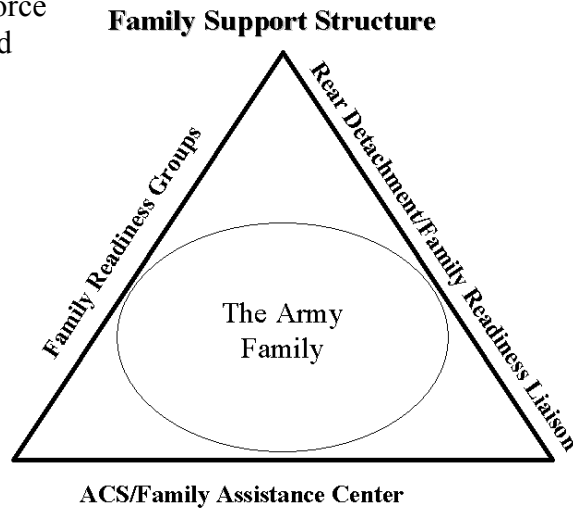
The RDC mission continues through redeployment. He/she assists the FRG leaders in setting up reunion classes for spouses, with the same intensity as providing predeployment briefings. Again, the network can provide a working team to reintegrate

the unit as smoothly as possible. A big part of the redeployment mission is recognition of all personnel, both soldiers and volunteers who supported the deployment effort. Their key roles should be recognized at community-welcoming events.

## The Need for Family Readiness Groups

When deployed, a typical battalion task force will leave behind roughly 250 spouses and 400 children. The deployed soldier's effectiveness and the unit's mission accomplishment are contingent upon the morale of the family members. As good leadership sustains the soldier's morale, so good leadership and concern sustains the family members' morale. Neither is based solely on financial security or physical needs such as food and lodging. As with soldiers, family members must receive respect, be kept informed, and know that their sacrifice is

worthwhile. One way to accomplish this is by contact with family members of other deployed soldiers. When structure is added to this body of family members, mutual support increases.



An FRG should initially act as an information agency, using telephone contact and a monthly newsletter (if desired) to disseminate information. The FRG's next major function as a conduit of feedback should evolve spontaneously. FRGs can identify issues and questions of concern to the family members. The RDC, as part of the command, can respond to these and return the solutions and information to the FRG for dissemination. This process will help the FRG to grow in structure, strength, and credibility.

For an FRG to flourish, the spouses must voluntarily commit themselves as members. Cooperation and volunteerism are thus essential. Once an FRG is organized, the RDC must patiently allow the group its independence. The persons who will best understand the needs of the spouses are the spouses themselves. The RDC should pay attention to their concerns. Any issue raised by the spouses merits attention. The best position that an RDC can have in relation to an FRG is that of being an advocate and provider of resource support, with little or no involvement in the inner workings of an FRG.

### *Rear Detachment Emotional Support for FRGs*

The entire rear detachment must project a positive image to the spouses. The rear detachment can enjoy a good working rapport with the spouses through the extension of simple courtesies. Those soldiers left back in the barracks, for example, might personally

escort visiting spouses to the orderly room rather than just pointing them down the hall. They may need to be reminded to be polite at all times.

Some simple gestures can help demonstrate goodwill on the part of the RDC and set a positive tone for RDC–FRG relations. For example, the battalion might purchase a Polaroid camera and film for use in snapping pictures of spouses. The spouse walks out with a snapshot to send to the soldier, which is an act of caring by the battalion.

The soldiers' LESs could be photocopied before being sent to them. For those soldiers who have signed a release, the copy of their LES is mailed to their spouse from the rear detachment, arriving at their home on or about payday.

The RDC of one unit set up a telephone credit card, which was charged to the battalion budget. This number was delegated to a select number of FRG contact persons who called long distance to spouses who had left the post area. This call every three weeks or so affirmed that the family member was doing well and helped to break their isolation from the FRG. In two months, this service cost the unit less than \$60.

The RDC can act as an advocate for the spouses in dealings with such offices as the deputy installation commander on active Army posts, who often has the authority to overcome roadblocks. On this point, three and one-half months after one active Army task force advance party deployed, there had been no congressional inquiries and no Inspector General complaints. Further, no soldier had been evacuated from the task force area of operations for family problems.

Good rapport and courteous treatment of all persons involved goes a long way toward facilitating a successful program.

## **FAMILY RESOURCE LINK**

### **TOPIC: Family Emergencies Requiring Return of Servicemember**

**Discussion:** The Army recognizes that some family emergencies warrant return of the soldier if existing military operations permit. The field commander determines whether mission conditions will allow the soldier's return. Emergencies involve the death, critical illness, or injury of a member of the immediate family. The RDC should have a copy of the commander's redeployment criteria.

**Lessons:** Immediate family members include the soldier's spouse, children, brother or sister, parent or guardian who raised the soldier in place of parents.

- # Critical illness or injury means the possibility of death or permanent disability.
- # Illnesses such as the flu and injuries such as a broken arm, although not minor, are not considered emergencies.
- # Prior to the soldier's departure, spouses and guardians must be educated on early return policy, the notification process, and the commander's redeployment criteria.
- # The spouse or guardian must contact the Red Cross, which will verify the nature of the emergency. The rear detachment, FRG, or installation FAC can assist the family in contacting the Red Cross, if necessary.

The soldier's commanding officer may require notification by Red Cross message verifying the nature of the emergency before the commander can make a decision to return the soldier.

## **Role of the Family Readiness Liaison**

FRLs act as coordinators for family assistance information. They can be appointed at any level of command and may work for or with the FAC or RDC. FRLs direct questions and requests from family members, FRG volunteers, and others to the proper agency or staff section. This role is especially vital when large numbers of soldiers are deployed, although the appointment and training of FRLs cannot wait until just before a deployment. Ideally, an FRL should be on call 24 hours a day (especially during deployments), and FRL contact numbers should be made available to soldiers, their families, and FRG volunteers.

See AR 600-20 (Draft), Para. 5.10 for duties of the Family Readiness Liaison.

See also "FRL Duties" in the next section of this chapter.

Each FRL should be briefed on the importance of his or her duties and trained in providing appropriate referral services. Each local Army installation and each local community will have a unique network of family-related programs, services, and agencies. Providing accurate, up-to-date information on this network is a significant job. Recognizing serious family problems and identifying appropriate resources to help solve them requires patience, good judgment, experience, and expertise, especially under crisis conditions. At times, the FRL may be called on to respond to situations involving domestic violence, potential suicide or another serious emergency, or to respond to distraught family members who have heard rumors of combat casualties.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

This section describes the roles of key military personnel who interact with the FRG and suggests how FRG duties might be distributed among volunteers. It also provides sample Standard Operating Procedures for ongoing FRG activities.

The roles and responsibilities of Army personnel whose activities most directly affect an FRG program and of key battalion-level and unit-level FRG volunteers are summarized below.

**Unit commanders** are responsible for establishing an atmosphere of care and concern for the families of unit soldiers. They should anticipate and address the needs of unit soldiers and their families when temporary separation occurs. This can be done by using orientation programs, command letters, predeployment briefings, and by providing family assistance materials and organizing social functions.

Unit commanders should organize systems of mutual assistance and a network of communication prior to and during deployment that includes the FRG and the chain of command. They actively sanction the FRG program and officially appoint key military FRLs. These FRLs assist the FRG by providing unit information systems, facilities, and resources, including unit rosters, mailing privileges, administrative supplies, equipment, transportation (when available and appropriate), training from unit and installation resources, and coordination of deployment family assistance plans.

The commander should involve community resource people in planning and implementing the deployment family support plan. This might include ACS staff, Staff Judge Advocate, the Red Cross, the adjutant or Bn S-1, chaplains, medical personnel, and command financial specialists. Commanders can ensure that all family members receive an installation telephone directory and appropriate family assistance materials. They should include soldiers in predeployment briefings and provide childcare whenever possible. They should also ensure that the necessary regulations and Standard Operating Procedures are in place prior to deployment, providing for the establishment of a FAC and a FAC duty book and the gathering of necessary information.

**Rear detachment commanders** are responsible for ensuring that families are cared for and assisted during deployment, in cooperation with the FAC and the FRG program. They should make an on-call officer available at the rear detachment on a 24-hour basis and make sure that all those working at the rear detachment are familiar with the role of the FRG and know who the FRG volunteers are and how to contact them.

**Family Readiness Liaisons** are appointed at every level of command. They link the command to FRGs, and FRGs to community service agencies. They also provide referrals for soldiers and families to these agencies, update the unit roster monthly and provide it to FRG leaders, support newsletter production, and track family members who leave the area during deployments. (See AR 600-20 (Draft), section 5.10.)

**Army Community Service** is the principal source of services for many active Army and Reserve Component personnel and their families who live near installations. ACS provides resources to the rear detachment, the FAC and FRGs, and assists in developing, providing, and coordinating FRG training programs. ACS assists unit and installation personnel with predeployment briefings and ensures units have copies of the installation telephone directories for family members and appropriate materials to assist in developing these briefings.

ACS is also responsible for coordinating with Army Emergency Relief and the American Red Cross to ensure rapid response to emergency financial situations. ACS should develop an ACS family assistance mobilization plan, coordinate implementation of the plan with individual units, and familiarize ACS volunteers with the plan. They should also assist with unit and FRG outreach efforts, especially to junior ranking families off post, and assist in the training of rear detachment personnel, especially regarding available community resources.

The Army National Guard **State Family Program Office** provides many of the services listed above for the National Guard family members who do not live near installations. The Army Reserve provides a Family Program Director at each Regional Support Command, who provides similar services.

**Chaplains** provide spiritual and emotional assistance and counseling to families. They may act as a liaison between family members and helping agencies, and they may provide for the physical needs of individuals not meeting other criteria, for example, by operating a food closet for families in need. Chaplains are also member of the FRG and should be invited to meetings. They are excellent resources for programs suited to soldiers and families at FRG meetings.

## **FRL Duties**

Because the service network in each local area will vary and because this information needs to be continuously updated, precise guidelines for handling specific problems and requests are not provided in this handbook. However, some of the special problems the FRL should be prepared to encounter and some of the resources most likely to be available are given in this section.

The FRL should keep careful records of all requests for information or assistance. A family assistance call sheet should be used to record, at a minimum:

- # the name of the FRL and the date and time of the call;
- # the caller's name and phone number and the problem reported;
- # the name and phone number of the person needing assistance (if not the same as the caller) and this person's address;
- # at least one other means of contact, such as a neighbor's phone or the person's FRG point of contact;

- # the name, rank, and unit of the soldier in this person's family, and their relationship to the person needing assistance; and
- # complete information on the disposition of the inquiry (information given, agency to which the person was referred, results of follow-up contacts).

Collection of this type of information from family members may require the use of a Privacy Act statement specifying that the purpose of the information is to provide assistance to the family and that giving the information is voluntary but failure to respond may result in a delay in receiving services. The FRL should check with the local command for details on this requirement.

A local resource notebook, in which information on services available both through the Army and through local community agencies is kept, should be made available to each FRL as a part of his or her training. Telephone numbers, hours of operation, names of contact persons, and details of service eligibility and availability will need constant updating. Examples of offices and agencies on which current information should be kept include these, although this list is far from complete:

- # Adjutant General's Office
- # Ambulance Services
- # American Red Cross
- # Army Community Service
- # Army Emergency Relief
- # TRICARE Office
- # Chaplain's Office
- # Dental Care Facilities
- # Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault Counseling
- # Emergency Medical Facilities
- # Finance Section
- # Food Bank Program
- # Food Stamp Program
- # Home Health Care
- # Housing Directorate
- # Immunization Clinic
- # Inspector General's Office
- # Legal Aid Society
- # Lending Closet
- # Mental Health Facilities

- # Military and Local Police
- # Ophthalmology/Optometry Facilities
- # Outpatient Medical Facilities
- # Public Transportation
- # Staff Judge Advocate
- # Transportation Office (Household Goods)
- # United Way
- # Well-Baby and Well-Child Clinics
- # WIC (Women, Infants and Children)

FRLs should be trained to distinguish between emergency and nonemergency inquiries. Sometimes this will be obvious; at other times, it may be clear only after careful listening and tactful questioning. Procedures should be established for responding to emergencies during off-duty as well as on-duty hours. All callers should be told to call back if the referral agency does not appear able to resolve their problem; all calls should be followed up by the FRL within 24 hours to be sure needed help has been received. An FRL receiving a call that might involve a life-threatening emergency should never tell the caller to hang up; instead, they should keep the caller on the phone while they get someone else to get help.

### **LIMIT**

FRLs should be aware that legal requirements and limitations under either state or federal law might affect their work. Reports that suggest the possibility of child abuse or neglect must be reported to the appropriate investigative agency. Reports of sexual assault or domestic violence are police matters, although victims of these crimes often elect to work through appropriate community agencies that can provide emotional support and specialized assistance.

**Casualty information.** All calls received from family members regarding rumors of either the death or the injury of a soldier must be handled with tact and diplomacy. Nothing should be confirmed or denied; only Casualty Branch personnel can give out casualty information.

An FRL who receives a call about a casualty rumor should take these steps:

- # Ask the caller politely to try to remain as calm as possible; remind the caller that information that does not come through official Army channels is unreliable.
- # Tell the caller that if the servicemember were in fact to become a casualty, a representative of Casualty Branch would contact them in person as soon as possible with this information.

- # Inform the caller that Casualty Branch will be contacted to investigate their concern, and then follow up by making this inquiry.
- # If Casualty Branch has no information on any casualty involving this soldier, call the family member as soon as possible and advise them of this.
- # If Casualty Branch does have information that the soldier sustained a casualty and the family member calls you again before official notification has been made, tell them you are still working on their request.

## **LIMIT**

Remember, the FRL should never make casualty notifications. Only the experts—Casualty Branch personnel—are authorized to release such information, using procedures established specifically for just such a purpose.

The FRL should be trained to remain polite, tactful, and sympathetic to the fears of the spouse or other family member, even if these fears turn out to have no foundation in fact. Family members who are worried or upset may need to be referred to a chaplain or mental health counselor even if there has been no known casualty.

## **FAMILY RESOURCE LINK**

### **TOPIC: Dealing With Grief**

**Discussion:** How a community deals with the grief brought about by the sudden, traumatic losses possible in war or in training accidents is critical. Leaders are the key. They must lead with warmth and sensitivity, and give the community permission to grieve through public observances. Comforting and ensuring the welfare of the next of kin are also vital to giving them the strength to move ahead.

**Lessons:** The following list of tips is provided to assist the bereaved:

- # Listen.
- # Provide assurance, but do not dismiss or negate the person's feelings.
- # Be patient.
- # Repeat directions/explanations until they are understood and remembered.
- # Treat them with warmth and sensitivity, the way you'd want to be treated.
- # Don't tell someone how he or she should feel; let them experience their own emotions.

## **FAMILY RESOURCE LINK**

### **TOPIC: Dealing With Grief (continued)**

- # Do share your own feelings about related experiences of loss.
- # Arrange for a close friend or relative to stay with the survivor.
- # Be with the survivor at a time normally reserved for the deceased spouse, such as evening when the spouse would be returning from work.
- # Allow the bereaved to direct the conversation if desired (sometimes nothing needs to be said; one's presence is enough).
- # Provide accurate information. It will lessen their hostility.
- # Be honest.
- # Help with chores and meals. Offer to babysit.
- # Screen and keep records of phone calls and visitors.
- # Send a note or flowers.
- # Isolate them from the media, if desired and needed.
- # Assist with thank-you notes.
- # Call weeks later, when others have stopped calling.
- # Spend special time with the widowed when depression is most likely to be experienced—anniversaries of the incident, holidays and birthdays, and during such times as when a child leaves or when the widowed may be experiencing a new loss that is likely to reopen old wounds.
- # Ensure that a person who speaks the same language is available.
- # Provide alternatives; be a sounding board; do not make decisions for them; allow people to decide what is best for themselves.
- # Encourage their independence.
- # Include them in social activities.
- # Remember, only a physician can prescribe medication for the bereaved.

**Public affairs.** Questions related to public affairs, news reports, or rumors of unit activities should be answered only on the basis of official public information releases from the commander or the RDC. Requests for additional information should be referred to the Public Affairs Officer. Special care should be taken to ensure that only authorized public information is released.

Advise the family member to be polite and use their own discretion if contacted by the press. However, it's best that they get in touch with the Public Affairs office before talking to someone from the news media; this office can give them whatever specific advice or assistance they might need. The FRL should remind the family member to check the credentials of anyone who contacts them to avoid a situation that could be awkward or even dangerous. The Public Affairs office can take care of this for them.

## **FAMILY RESOURCE LINK**

### **TOPIC: Dealing with the News Media**

**Discussion:** Reporters relish the opportunity to interview soldiers and their families during military operations. Interviewers often focus on the sensational, the emotional, or the controversial; these areas supposedly “sell” news. American news reporters play a vital role in democracy. It is not harassment when they ask for an interview. It is harassment when they persist after you’ve declined to comment.

**Lessons:** Before answering questions, write down the name of the reporter and his news organization. This will discourage the reporter from persisting if you decline to comment.

- # Before an interview, set the ground rules. Tell the interviewer what you will or will not discuss, especially when talking to a television or radio reporter. If the interviewer breaks your ground rules once the taping session starts, end the interview. Keep in mind that with today’s technology, even the enemy has access to your comments the moment you make them.
- # Do not address specific units, personnel strength, or anything else that would identify your (or your spouse’s) mission. Talk only about those areas in which you have first-hand knowledge. Do not speculate about future operations.
- # Do not attempt to speak for your unit, installation, the Department of the Army, or the Department of Defense.
- # Do not comment on our national policies, especially foreign affairs; leave this to the highest levels of government.
- # Don’t say anything, even in jest, that you don’t want to read, see, or hear later.
- # Be aware of the levels of attribution used by some reporters: “on the record” remarks, where you may be quoted directly or indirectly by name; “background information” remarks, where the interviewer agrees to attribute your comments only to a nonspecific source (a “family member,” for example); or “off the record” remarks that are to be held in confidence and not used in any form.
- # “Do not quote me” is not the same as “off the record.” If you tell a reporter not to quote you, he or she may still assume you are providing “background information” that can be used in a story. Don’t make “background” remarks if you are being taped. It is always best to assume you are speaking “on the record.”